

generations breathe cleaner air, and we can protect them from the grave risks of global warming.

Remarks at the Fifth Millennium Evening at the White House

January 25, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. I would like to take about the last four sentences of Professor Marty's talk and emblazon it in the consciousness of every human being on the face of the Earth.

This is a wonderful night. I'd like to begin by thanking the First Lady for leading our Millennium Project and by bringing these two remarkable people here. I'm terribly impressed with both of them. They took about 40 minutes, by my count, and did the last 1,000 years and the entire future. *[Laughter]* Took me an hour and 17 minutes the other night to talk about one year. *[Laughter]*

I also want to express my gratitude to both of you for not making fun of those of us who insist on ignoring the Gregorian calendar and proclaiming the millennium next New Year's Eve at midnight. *[Laughter]*

I thought Professor Davis did a great service to all of us who are less well-read in what happened 1,000 years ago by debunking some of the popular myths. Clearly, not everyone was giving away all their possessions or cowering in churches waiting for the world to end. Maybe what was said tonight will discourage some of our fellow citizens who seem determined to buy desert land and hoard gold, bullets, and Skoal in their pickup trucks. *[Laughter]* I don't know. You laugh, this is a major source of conversation every morning in the White House, here. *[Laughter]*

I also thank her for reminding us about the bold voyages of discovery, the important advances in human knowledge. I thank her for reminding us that people were, and I quote what she said, "enmeshed in reading texts together." Who would have thought about book clubs 1,000 years ago.

I thank her for telling us about the medieval Peace of God movement, which has a millennial connection to us in what has been going on in Northern Ireland, the Balkans,

the Middle East, Africa. I thank her, too, for reminding us that ordinary people, even a long time ago, can make a difference to a good end.

I thank Professor Marty for his fundamental insights, for reminding us to be both hopeful and humble. He asked all these questions. I enjoyed Professor Hawking being here and trying to deal with all these questions of time: how we measure time; why do we care so much about the millennium, or a century, or a year, or our birthdays and anniversaries, for that matter? We have to have some way of organizing our thoughts and our plans against the mysteries of time and timelessness. We have to find some way of explaining our poor efforts to fulfill our own destinies and to live out our small piece of God's design.

Most of us, sooner or later, come to the conclusion that life really is a journey, not a destination, until the end. But we all still need a few benchmarks along the way to get there.

I thank them both for ending on a note of hope and for recognizing that you cannot have hope without faith—for believers, faith in God—and in the end you cannot practice hope without charity or love.

One of the dilemmas I constantly confront as President is the necessity of believing in the idea of progress, with the certainty of man's and woman's constant demonstration of making the same old mistakes over and over again, millennium after millennium, in new and different guises and the certainty that perfection cannot be achieved in this life.

I think there is a way to reconcile the idea of progress with the frailty of humanity. I think that you can make a case that, on balance, the world is a better place today than it was a thousand years ago for people who have had a chance to drink fully of life's possibilities. I think you can make a case that we are obliged, all of us as human beings, to try to extend that opportunity to more and more of our fellow citizens on this small planet. And Mr. Goldin's successors in interest will be taking us into outer space to see if we can find some others, somewhere else, to worry about 1,000 years from now.

We thank Professors Davis and Marty for giving us a chance to make some sense of the millennium and for reminding us, in the end, that the only meaning it will have is the meaning we give it in our own lives.

Thank you very much.

Now, I'd like to ask Ellen Lovell to take over the floor and turn over the floor to all of you and to the thousands who are joining us, thanks to technology, for some questions.

Ellen?

[At this point, Ms. Lovell, Director, White House Millennium Council, and the First Lady led the question-and-answer portion of the evening. The following question from the Internet was directed to the President.]

The First Lady. This is from Dr. Joseph W. Epstein, from Monroe, New York, and it's for the President: Should the dawning of this new millennium see a greater participation of scientists in studies aimed at preserving our environment and recapturing what has been lost? Government and business incentives would be required to encourage scientists in these areas. Hopefully, a person who recaptures a rain forest could receive as much acclaim as the batter of ever more home runs. Thank you. [Laughter]

The President. Well, the short answer to his question is, obviously, yes. If you look at—one of the things I was going to say in my closing remarks I'll just say now to respond to this question, because we don't have enough time for everybody to ask a question for us all to have a conversation. I wish we did.

I think something that would be helpful for all of you is if, when you go home tonight, before you go to bed, if you would take out a piece of paper and a pencil or a pen, and write down the three things that you're most worried about, with the dawn of the new millennium, and the three things that you're most hopeful about. And then ask yourself what, if anything, can you do about either one?

Now, I think, with the growth of the world's population and with the emergence of a new economy based more on ideas and information and technology and less on industrial patterns of production, we still see an enormous destruction of the world's re-

sources. And the most serious problem is the problem of climate change, global warming.

The rain forest is important for a lot of reasons—he mentioned the rain forest—because an enormous percentage of the oxygen generated from non-ocean sources comes from rain forests; because well over half the plant and animal life on the globe lives in the rain forests; and therefore, the answers to some of my most profoundly important medical questions lie in the rain forest, quite apart from our responsibility to preserve it just for what it is.

So we have put a lot of emphasis on trying to create more financial and other incentives for people to deal with climate change and global warming, to try to help to save the rain forests. And I have, for years, kind of brooded about the prospect of having a global alliance between governments, chemical companies, and others that would have an interest in it, in joining together, in effect, to pay to save the rain forests. The Government of Brazil actually has a program there, where they try to invest and set aside large tracts of rain forest land.

But I think one of the things that is going to happen in the next century is that we will move very close to the limits of our body's ability to live. I think you're going to see an exponential increase in life expectancy in the next 30 years or so. And to go back to what you said, I think that it's going to aggravate the underclass problem, because you have, in countries where the health system is breaking down, a decline in life expectancy.

Now, where that's going on, there will be more and more pressure to develop more and more scientific discoveries and also to more democratically spread it and to lift people out of poverty. I think that there has to be an enormous amount of money and incentives and time and thought given to how a lot of countries can skip a stage of economic development that would otherwise require them to destroy what remains of the world's natural resources and put us in a position where we could never solve this global warming problem.

And that's why I signed the Kyoto treaty on climate change, why I have pushed it so

hard. I think it can be the organizing principle to get to the objective that our questioner asks. Unfortunately, my successors will have to do a lot of the work, but I hope we'll at least have laid the foundation for it, because it will be one of the most significant public questions of the next, not just the next century, the next couple of decades. It would be on my list of three.

[The question-and-answer portion of the evening continued. The President then made closing remarks.]

The President. Well, I will be very brief. First of all, I think we should thank our speakers again. They were magnificent. *[Applause]*

Secondly, I would like to say that I think we all leave here feeling that we now have more questions than we did when we showed up, which means they succeeded. I would just like to leave you with this one thought. You all know that I am a walking apostle of hope and progress. The question is, how do you pursue it without arrogance, with appropriate humility, and without a definition that is too narrow?

Reverend Jackson asked a question about Africa, and Dr. Marty gave a great rejoinder about how we had to be more concerned because there were more and more Christians growing in Africa and fewer elsewhere. I would like to ask you to think about another thing.

Our whole sense of time and marking time is so rooted in the development of our various monotheistic philosophies, Christianity for me, and for many of you, or Judaism or Islam. How do you think this whole discussion would sound, tonight, to a serious Buddhist or a serious Confucian? How would we argue with them about the idea of progress. How would they argue with us about the idea of the immutable? How can we reconcile the two? Because in the end, that's what religious faith does. It gives you a sense of the timeless and a sense of what you're supposed to do with your time.

And I just—this has been thrilling for me. But I hope all of you will remember the question I asked you. And if you feel so inclined later, feel free to write to me about the things that you're most worried about and the most

hopeful about, and what you think I ought to spend my time between now and the millennium doing for you and the rest of the world.

Thank you. Join us in the dining room for a reception. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The White House Millennium Evening program began at 7:37 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In the President's remarks, he referred to physicist Stephen W. Hawking and civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson. The lecture, "The Meaning of the Millennium," was presented by Natalie Zemon Davis, professor emeritus, Princeton University, and Martin E. Marty, director, the Public Religion Project. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, Professor Davis, and Professor Marty, as well as the question-and-answer portion of the evening. The lecture was cybercast on the Internet.

Memorandum on Assistance to Kosovo

January 25, 1999

Presidential Determination No. 99-10

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Determination Pursuant to Section 2(c)(1) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as Amended

Pursuant to section 2(c)(1) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as amended, 22 U.S.C. 2601(c)(1), I hereby determine that it is important to the national interest that up to \$25 million be made available from the U.S. Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund to meet the urgent and unexpected needs of refugees and migrants.

These funds may be used to meet the urgent and unexpected needs of refugees, displaced persons, victims of conflict, and other persons at risk due to the Kosovo crisis. These funds may be used, as appropriate, to provide contributions to international and nongovernmental organizations. You are authorized and directed to inform the appropriate committees of the Congress of this determination and the use of funds under this